



Village of French Settlement Newsletter

In 2010, 5 acres were purchased adjacent to the existing town property in order to construct a community center. (read more inside this newsletter)

Spring 2012

GRANTS AWARDED TO THE VILLAGE OF FRENCH SETTLEMENT

Grants/funds applied for and received: Total in 2 year period: \$149,129.00

- LGAP 2009-2010: This grant of \$12,500 was used toward the purchase of limestone for a new 17,000 square foot parking area. This parking area is needed for municipal, pavilion and museum functions.
- LGAP 2010-2011: This \$12,500 grant was used to clear, and prepare the public property recently purchased. It also allowed for the replacement of 16 old fluorescent lights with new energy saving parabolic lights in the FS Municipal Building meeting room, lobby, and clerk's office.
- 2009-2010 State Appropriations: \$48,500 went toward the following:
 1. Installed a new sewer system for the FS Municipal Building as the existing septic system was beyond repair.
 2. Erected a 580' chain link (storm) fence along the new property line.
 3. Asbestos report and removal of asbestos from the old structures on the property recently purchased. Demolition of structures, and clearing of additional property.
 4. Constructed a 30'x50'x12' storage building to house emergency supplies, police department boat, and vehicles.
 5. Emergency Police Boat—\$10,800 (for flood events and rescue/recovery of victims)
- DNR Grant: \$64,829 toward a Geo-thermal system—'Green Project'

Other Grant Fund Report

As you know, in 2007 French Settlement was awarded our largest single grant ever totaling \$103,150. This grant enabled the Village of French Settlement to improve our ability to patrol the community, as well as ensure the safety of our police officers. This project is part of the Natural Disaster Initiative and is located in the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Initiative. With these funds we purchased two new police vehicles, six bullet-proof (ballistic) vests, and a digital communication sign. These purchases proved their worth during this past 2008 hurricane season. This grant award has enabled us to be better prepared for future emergencies and disasters at no out-of-pocket expense to French Settlement or its tax-payers. Between January 2007-2009, French Settlement was awarded \$44,186.83 through Louisiana Government Assistance Program (LGAP) formerly Rural Development Grants; \$1853 in grant funds through Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement; and \$5,820 through Homeland Security Grants.

In September 2011, a new LGAP grant application was submitted for \$25,000. With state budget cutbacks we are uncertain as to whether or not French Settlement will receive these funds but remain hopeful.

French Settlement does not collect property or sales taxes and our tax rate remains lower than the parish at 8% which allows us to purchase homes, vehicles, boats etc. at a lower tax rate. Through grants, the village is able to keep our tax rate as low as possible and serve our residents without adding the burden of yet another tax.



Census 2010—1116 population - Village or Town Status

Census of 2010-French Settlement-population 1116. Once French Settlement reached 1001 in population, the Board had to decide whether to change the status of French Settlement from 'village to town'. After much consideration, the Board agreed for the time being to retain the status/name of Village of French Settlement because of funding or lack thereof. This does not mean that French Settlement will be limited to growth. In fact, if annexation throughout the village ever takes place, it would make sense to split it into 5 districts, with one aldermen representing each district. As it is, French Settlement is currently rural and spread out (1000 feet on either side of the highway), so creating this would cause many undesirable, costly issues. This decision made will save money over the years due to no additional expenses being paid to 5 aldermen instead of the current 3 aldermen, which is a requirement of town status. If ever the Board wishes to reconsider this status they will have that option. Representative M. J. "Mert" Smiley's HB 215 of Regular Session 2011 was signed by the governor, allowing French Settlement to have the option. This was greatly appreciated given that we operate on limited income. If town status is ever implemented much would need to change in order to supplement French Settlement's income in order to provide services. We believe that keeping taxes down in this bad economy is what most of our residents would choose. You are welcome to contact your aldermen to express your wishes or concerns on any issue including this matter.

**From: Mayor Toni Guitrau**

Since May of 2004, it has been an honor and privilege to serve as mayor and work along the side of our elected and appointed officials. I would like to provide a few quick facts as follows: In 2010, 5 acres were purchased parallel to the existing municipal property in order to later construct a much needed community center and park; we were able to purchase this property without borrowing money. We fought and won against losing our property and homes to make way for a Baton Rouge Loop; we proved that we are not a 'speed-trap' community and had French Settlement removed from the online website as such. As stated throughout this newsletter much has transpired. We have a wonderful, experienced Board of Aldermen and I look forward to working with Aldermen Danette Aydele, Teresa Miller, Glen Newell and Chief of Police Harry Brignac in the months ahead. Our elected officials have the best interest of the village at heart, which makes for a positive working relationship and in turn is a benefit to French Settlement. I would also like to express my appreciation and acknowledge the hard work of our town clerk, Debbie Culler, Officers Jayson Robins, Reserve Officer Matthew Allen and Assistant Chief Lawrence Callender. Please join us for town meetings every 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7 pm.

From Alderman Danette Aydele:

First of all I want to THANK the Village of French Settlement in your continued support since Kaitlin's untimely death. It has been a long five years but I take each day one at a time. I am learning all the rules, regulations and laws since this is my first time as an alderman. It has been interesting and I look forward to serving each of you of the Village of French Settlement for the next four years. If you have any questions please contact me and I will help in any way I can. Once again thank you for all your support.

From Alderman Glen Newell:

What a blessing it has been to serve the people of French Settlement. The accomplishments in the village the past few years has been a joint effort, working with the Mayor, other Alderman, Chief of Police, Deputies, fire department and our tireless volunteers. This year has

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The Mayor and Board of Aldermen wish to thank Mr. Edward Perry Gore for filling the vacancy of the alderman seat after Sean Guitrau resigned. Sean Guitrau resigned after getting married and moving to Prairieville, Louisiana. We would also like to recognize Monte Ferguson for her years of service as town clerk from November 2004—January 2011.

From: Past-Alderman Sean Guitrau

I want to thank everyone of French Settlement who elected me when I first ran for alderman in 2004. I was happy to learn that we did a good enough job as aldermen our first 4 years to have no one run against us in 2008. This showed us all how much faith and trust we had behind us. I had a great time and learned so much about how our town works and the wonderful people that live here. I just want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve this great community and do some real good for everyone as your elected official. I hope the next person to fill my seat will have the same respect that I did for the Mayor, Chief of Police, and Aldermen. Remember, don't let the position of being a servant of the people go to your head. It is because of them you are sitting in that chair and it is because of them you should want to sit in the first place. I would like to thank my mom, Toni Guitrau, for encouraging me to run and also having the chance to serve along with Glen Newell and Teresa Miller. If not for our understanding and love for our community we wouldn't have been able to do what was needed for French Settlement. I thank God for this great privilege he gave me. *****

Award of Appreciation presented to Sean Guitrau for his years of service to the Village of French Settlement as alderman. L-R: Mayor Guitrau, Aldermen Sean Guitrau, Teresa Miller and Glen Newell.

been very productive in planning the French Settlement Park next door to the Town Hall. I would also like to invite everyone to view our updated Town Hall website, and attend a Town Hall meeting. We can only continue our joint accomplishments with the support of our community. I would like to thank the French Settlement Volunteer Fire Department for their time and dedication that they invest each month in our community. Please consider volunteering in our schools and fire department, or somewhere in our community. You will be blessed.

From: Alderman/Mayor Pro Tem Teresa Miller

We are so excited about the purchase of the land that adjoins the Town Hall property!! This has been on our "wish list" for a few years, and thanks to the diligence of Mayor Guitrau, who has been trying to obtain this long before my time on the board - it is now a reality. We have plans for a community center that should make every resident proud, and we will be announcing little ways for everyone to participate in the development of the surrounding grounds. Grant money is hard to come by right now, but that doesn't stop Lawrence Callender, who volunteers his time to search and assist Mayor Guitrau in applying for every dollar that we may qualify for. We are truly blessed as a community!



French Settlement Police Department and FS Volunteer Fire Department Annual Reports for Years 2010 and 2011

2010 Annual Police Report

Traffic Citations - 710	Concealed Weapons - 0
DWI arrests - 16	Harassing phone calls - 12
Homicides - 0	Drug Arrests - 14
Accidents - 27	Vandalism - 3
Private Calls - 351	Reckless Operation - 5
Burglar Alarms - 49	Civil - 29
Damage to property - 31	Burglary - 0
Theft - 14	Aggravated Assault - 7
Threats - 11	Possession of Drugs - 16
Unauthorized use - 6	Criminal Mischief - 8
Hit & Run - 0	Aggravated Battery - 5
Simple battery - 14	Drugs on School Grounds - 16
Weapon on School grounds - 0	Total arrest—65
Disturbances - 21	

L-R: Assistant Chief Callender, Officer Robins, Chief Brignac, and Officer Allen



L-R: Chief Brignac, Officer Matherne, Assistant Chief Callender, and Officer Robins



Please report any suspected drug crimes or activities to Chief of Police Harry Brignac. All reports are considered confidential and would help deter illegal drugs in our community

The police department is working with the Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office and Drug Task Force on fighting drugs in our community and surrounding area. Arrests have been made in and out of this community. The police department requests that you call us when you see anything that might be against the law. We encourage everyone to never drink and drive. Turn on your headlights during rain and fog, and always wear a seat-belt. We welcome new Officers Jayson Robins & Matthew Allen.
Chief Harry Brignac

2011 Annual Police Report

Traffic Citations - 667	Concealed Weapons - 0
DWI arrests - 1	Harassing phone calls - 11
Homicides - 0	Drug Arrests - 8
Accidents - 30	Vandalism - 8
Private Calls - 388	Reckless Operation - 4
Burglar Alarms - 31	Civil - 31
Damage to property - 28	Burglary - 3
Theft - 39	Aggravated Assault - 0
Threats - 10	Possession of Drugs - 8
Unauthorized use - 5	Criminal Mischief - 6
Hit & Run - 2	Aggravated Battery - 3
Simple battery - 10	Drugs on School Grounds - 3
Weapon on School grounds - 0	Total Arrests - 72
Disturbances - 18	

2009 FSPD Report—DRUGS

Drug Arrests— 7
Possession of Drugs—6

Drugs on School Grounds—6

2008 FSPD Report—DRUGS

Drug Arrests— 11
Possession of Drugs—8
Drugs on School Grounds—8

"As judge of Mayor's Court, I sentence convicted drug-offenders to pay maximum fines. Repeat offenders pay maximum fines and may serve jail time, plus probation."

Mayor Toni Guitrau

Purchased with State Appropriations: Emergency Police Boat—\$10,800 (for flood events and rescue/recovery of victims)



2010 and 2011 FS Volunteer Fire Dept. Report "Neighbors Helping Neighbors Since 1971"

2010

Fire calls	14
Medical calls	176

2011

Fire Calls	38
Medical Calls	273

Dear Neighbor,

During the aftermath of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the Volunteers managed to keep the Fire Department open 24 hours a day. The Fire Department assisted the Police Department in clearing the roads and directing traffic for the people in our community to be able to get gas and be able to get in and out of town for needed supplies. And the Fire Dept. also had sand and bags available for the houses in low lying areas.

The Fire Department has State of the Art Equipment for fighting fires and rescue, all through the efforts of our Fire Chief, Alan Guitreau, in getting Grants to purchase this much needed equipment. We would like to thank our community for the donations that keep the Fire Department going and for the passing of the renewal of our 10 mil tax. We would also like to remind our community that volunteers are always needed. Please make sure your house address is visible from both directions! (At least 2" tall)

IF WE CAN NOT FIND YOU, WE CAN NOT HELP YOU! Sincerely, Your Volunteers



You may contact us at:
P.O. Box 3
French Settlement, LA 70733



Phone: 225-698-6100
Fax: 225-698-3007
E-mail: frenchsettlement@hotmail.com

We were offered the opportunity in 2009 to apply for a DNR grant as were the other 7 municipalities in the parish. If we had not applied, this money would have been awarded to one of the other municipalities. As it was, we soon found ourselves without air-conditioning or heat in half of the FS Municipal Building in 2010 and only recently were given the go-ahead on the project. (See the Livingston Parish news article below for details)

FRENCH SETTLEMENT GOES GREEN WITH FEDERAL DOE GRANT (Livingston Parish News article)

FRENCH SETTLEMENT— A \$64,800 geothermal heating and cooling system is being installed this week at the French Settlement Town Hall, said Mayor Toni Guitrau. The geothermal system was approved as a federal grant through the Department of Energy, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and Livingston Parish government. "We first applied for this grant on November 6, 2009, over two years ago," Guitrau said. "It involved a rigorous process of audits, environmental, cultural, regional, plus endless conferences before we met the federal Department of Energy requirements."

In the middle of the application process, the air conditioning unit at Town Hall broke down.

"We were finally informed that our proposal was not only approved, but had been one of the best ideas, maximizing the goals of the grant," Guitrau said.

Replacement of the Town Hall's traditional air conditioning and heating system with the geothermal system will reduce village heating and air conditioning costs by two-thirds and extend the lifespan of the unit by 25-30 years, Guitrau said.

This temperature control process draws from the relatively constant temperature underground. Pipes will be lowered into the earth through 12 holes, each 250 ft. deep, forming one continuous closed-loop, said French Settlement resident Lawrence Callender a retiree from The Dow Chemical Company, who has a geothermal system in his home.

"Imagine taking a really long hose, close to 3,500 feet long and snaking it down all 12 drilled heat sink holes without cutting," Callender said.

Water circulates through these small-diameter, high-density polyethylene pipes, in constant contact with the earth. As the water circulates, heat is transferred from the hot compressor gases in the A/C unit from the Town Hall.

The water never leaves the pipes; it just circulates continually so that heat is transferred through the pipe, Callender said.

The system is so efficient because of the relatively constant and cool temperature underground, about 55 degrees, Callender said. The excavation area is not large and once the pipes are installed and covered over, the area can be still be used for parking.

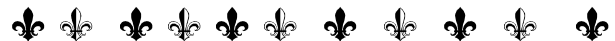
The majority of residential and commercial A/C units use external condenser coils and fans to cool the compressor gases (Freon). This requires additional energy to power the condenser fan and foul in the exposure to the elements. The closed loop system replaces this with just a small water pump that uses a fraction of the energy. An added bonus is the equipment is located inside the building out of the elements extending the service life, thus reducing French Settlement's carbon footprint. "Most people aren't aware of this alternative technology, but it's been around for over 40 years," Callender said. "I installed it in my house 28 years ago and it paid for itself in just 5 years."

"This savings equates to an average utility cost savings of about \$244 a month, over a 30 year lifespan," Guitrau said.

The grant required that all equipment had to be made in America. French Settlement is getting a geothermal system from Water Furnace, installed by contractor Alan Watts Service Inc. from Baton Rouge.

Steve Winters, president of Alan Watts a certified geothermal designer, is personally overseeing the installation, Callender said.

"None of this would have been possible without the help and support of Parish President Mike Grimmer, Grant Writer Heather Crain, and Billy Williamson with the Technology Assessment Division of the Department of Natural Resources," Guitrau said.



The Mayor and Board of Aldermen presented a Resolution of Appreciation to Representative Smiley who supported the Village of French Settlement from 2004-2010 to receive state appropriations totaling \$63,500 and from 2006-2010 to receive LGAP funding totaling \$73,900. Representative Smiley was instrumental in securing state funding to repair French Settlement area state highways including but not limited to Hwy. 16, 42, and 444.



Elizabeth “Betty” Brignac was an elected French Settlement alderman for 8 years and volunteer reserve officer, FS-3 dispatcher/deputy since 1984. Betty’s untimely death on August 14, 2011 came as a shock to all who knew, loved and depended on her. The Mayor and Board of Aldermen, French Settlement Police Department and LPSO miss her greatly. We appreciate the time and energy she dedicated to our community. Taking approximately 300 calls to her home each year on behalf of the community and FSPD was a burden and serious responsibility.



Above, French Settlement Assistant Chief of Police, Lawrence Callender presents Chief of Police Harry Brignac with a plaque of appreciation and in memory of FS-3, Elizabeth “Betty” Brignac for her many years as a volunteer deputy/dispatcher with the French Settlement Police Department. (Photos provided by Trish Robins)



Officer Wilfred “Willie” J. Matherne was awarded a plaque of appreciation for his years of service and dedication as a full time police officer since June of 1997 with the French Settlement Police Department. Officer Matherne retired from the FSPD on September 30, 2011. His service is greatly appreciated and his presence on our highways is missed.

ALL BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

LIVINGSTON PARISH PERMIT OFFICE ON HIGHWAY 63

Since 1997, French Settlement began issuing building permits. At that time, Livingston Parish only issued 'flood permits' so we were ahead of the parish in issuing building permits. However, since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, we have had to use (3rd party) the certified Livingston Parish building officials and inspectors as required by state law for all our construction. In 2011, we signed a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the parish to allow the permit application/administrative paperwork to be issued by Livingston Parish Permit Office. This office is located on Hwy. 63 directly in front of the new Office of Motor Vehicles and is located in the same building as the Health/Sewer Department. For a construction permit you must obtain permits from each department. This decision should expedite the process of permitting for all of our residents.

French Settlement officials will retain authorization over all development such as subdivisions (minor and major) apartments, condos, and mobile home parks and addressing. New addresses will still be given by the Clerk at the FS Municipal Building. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at 225-698-6100. The FS town hall is now closed on Fridays. Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.—5 p.m.

If you apply for a permit, please notify the Livingston Parish Permit Office that you reside inside French Settlement city limits.

LP Permit Office: 225-686-3021

NEW: Traffic tickets and/or warrants may be paid online now at www.trafficpayment.com

CRS" Community Rating System" New Flood Maps & how it may affect your property

<http://lamp.lsuagcenter.com/?FIPS=22063> (allows you to type in your address and determine if your property is in a flood zone)

Some of you may receive flood information during the year as is required by the National Flood Insurance Program "NFIP". This information must be mailed out to you in order for French Settlement residents to qualify for a 5% discount on flood insurance. In 2011, French Settlement had a successful 5 year CRS audit performed. More of our homes are being considered in a flood zone with the new (map) FIRM being released on April 3, 2012. As part of the requirement, French Settlement adopted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance on March 14, 2012 so our residents will be eligible for flood insurance.

If you wish to determine if you will now be in a flood zone please contact us at the town hall. Flood insurance on a home not within a flood zone is less expensive than in a flood zone so you may wish to consider purchasing flood insurance. If you are determined to be in a flood zone there is a 2 year Preferred Price or cost that will keep the insurance at a lower rate until the 2 year period expires. Some existing LOMAS (Letter of Map Amendments) are being validated. After attending a FEMA meeting on February 13, 2012, I learned that a public meeting may be arranged so that we can attend and see how this new FIRM (map) will affect our property. Feel free to contact the town hall with any questions you may have. If we do not know the answer, we will be happy to find out for you.

Public Notice: Gina Duhe, Legislative Assistant to Representative Clay Schexnayder will be stationed at the FS Town Hall on the second Wednesday of each month from 9 am to 4 pm to meet with residents of the surrounding area about any concerns or issues you may have.

This year will be the 5th year of Kaitlin Aydele's untimely death a Scholarship Poker Run will be held on April 14th 11am until at Manny's Bar. Contact Danette Aydele or Manny's Bar for more details.

The pavilion may be rented for \$75 per day by calling 225-698-6100. The museum will open for your function if notified in advance. Please view our website at www.frenchsettlement-la.gov and LIKE us on Facebook so that you may be informed of any upcoming news and events! As a courtesy service, any French Settlement business may advertise free of charge on our business section. Please contact us through our email address frenchsettlement@hotmail.com to be included or removed.

Hope you enjoyed this Newsletter!

Mayor Toni Guitrau